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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4198  
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 6548  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 2936  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3716  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA IMMEDIATE 0035  
RHHMUNA/CDRUSPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 001112

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR ISN  
DEPT FOR EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/25/2019  
TAGS: [KN](#) [KS](#) [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [RP](#)  
SUBJECT: STRONG PHILIPPINE REACTION TO DPRK NUCLEAR TEST  
  
REF: MANILA 739

Classified By: Acting DCM Tom Gibbons, Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

11. (SBU) Summary: Echoing President Obama's condemnation of North Korea's latest nuclear test as a reckless threat to the world's peace and security, the Philippine government reacted strongly in the wake of a May 25 nuclear test by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), pressing the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program and to abide by earlier agreements it had made in accordance with the Six-Party Talks. In a May 25 discussion with the Ambassador, Secretary of National Defense Teodoro called the DPRK's nuclear test "provocative" and a great cause for concern. President Arroyo plans to go ahead with a visit to South Korea May 30-June 2. End summary.

12. (SBU) The Philippine government's May 25 statement said, "The Philippine government supports the UN Security Council Resolutions on the matter and urges the DPRK to abandon its nuclear weapons program and honor its commitments to the Six-Party Talks." Malacanang Palace Deputy Presidential Spokesperson Lorelei Fajardo added that the Philippines has a "working relationship with the DPRK despite our differences" and remains "committed to global nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament efforts."

GREAT CAUSE FOR CONCERN  
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13. (C) In a private May 25 conversation with the Ambassador, Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro characterized the DPRK underground nuclear test as a "great cause for concern" because of the threat that it posed to regional security. Teodoro remarked on the difficulty of discerning North Korea's motives in undertaking such a test, saying that it was "hard to grasp what they stood to gain from such a provocative act." The Defense Secretary added that he was looking forward to discussing the matter further with colleagues from all over Asia at upcoming meetings of the Shangri-La Dialogue later this week.

PRESSING ON WITH ROK VISIT  
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14. (SBU) Tensions in the Korean peninsula will apparently not deter Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo from a previously scheduled four-day visit to Seoul later this week. Malacanang Palace's Lorelei Fajardo outlined that "the President will proceed with her South Korean visit to promote our bilateral interests and participate in the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit." During her May 30 - June 2

visit, President Arroyo is scheduled to meet with President Lee Myung-Bak and, in the words of the Palace spokesperson, "chart a new direction" in Philippine-South Korean relations. (This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations.)

15. (SBU) The leading dailies Philippine Star and Philippine Daily Inquirer featured front-page coverage of the North Korean nuclear test. A half-page Star article included a large photo of South Korean protesters, while the Inquirer highlighted concerns expressed by President Obama, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, and South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak. The DPRK's April 5 launch of a multistage, long-range Taepodong-2 missile drew similar high-level media attention, and was likewise condemned by the Philippine government as dangerous and destabilizing to the region's security.  
KENNEY